

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey
970 Broad Street, Seventh Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102



Paul J. Fishman, U.S. Attorney

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Assistant U.S. Attorney
RICHARD E. CONSTABLE, III
973-297-2719

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Hawthorne Councilwoman Plead Guilty to Social Security Fraud

(More)

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J. Gregory Reinert, PAO

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NEWARK – Hawthorne councilwoman Shirley J. Shortway-English pleaded guilty today to stealing approximately \$17,000 in social security disability payments, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Shortway-English, 56, made her first appearance in federal court and pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge William H. Walls to a one-count Information that charges her with theft of government funds. Judge Walls release the defendant on a \$25,000 unsecured bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for April 26.

According to the Information, Shortway-English, a two-term councilwoman, fraudulently received \$17,005 in social security disability benefits. At her plea hearing, Shortway-English admitted that between January 2007 and December 2009 she applied for and received social security disability payments fraudulently claiming that she was unable to work. However, Shortway-English admitted that during this time period she worked at Shortway's Barn, a family restaurant in Hawthorne.

Shortway-English stated that she knowingly failed to report that she was employed and, therefore, not entitled to receive social security disability benefits.

The theft charge carries a maximum statutory penalty of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Walls will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Fishman credited Special Agents of the Social Security Administration's Office of the Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Edward J. Ryan of the New York Field Division, and criminal investigators of the U.S. Attorney's Office for investigation of the case.

The Government is represented by Assistant US Attorney Richard E. Constable, III of the Special Prosecutions Division.

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Defense Counsel: Amelio Marino, Esq. Wayne